

As IEG members we welcome this opportunity to comment on the Chair's report of the third meeting of the Informal Expert Group (IEG) and on the draft opinions. We would also like congratulate the Chair on a successful meeting and express our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the IEG, both in person and remotely.

### **On the Chair's report**

We request that the interventions by the USA, Center for Democracy & Technology, Portugal, Paypal, and Computer & Communications Industry Association on the importance of ensuring the fullest, broadest participation at WTPF be noted and reflected in the Chair's report.

- As a multistakeholder consensus forum, it is critical that the WTPF facilitate civil society's participation as an independent voice in these and other deliberations.
- A number of IEG members supported this position and requested that the ITU Secretariat look into this matter. The Chair's report should reflect these interventions, especially the request that the ITU Secretariat look into the matter.

### **Draft opinions**

When the IEG's draft opinions are discussed at the WTPF meeting in May, we would like to see following issues addressed.

#### Promoting Internet Exchange Points (IXP's)

- We welcome the draft opinion on promoting IXPs, which supports civil society priorities of advancing affordable access to the Internet and promoting effective competition as reflected in the Best Bits statements. In particular, we support the recognition of the "virtuous cycle" the creation of IXPs enable.

#### Enabling environment for Broadband development

- We are pleased with the opinion on an enabling environment from broadband development. We strongly support it as an excellent example of an opinion in which the ITU will play a central role through the appropriate ITU-D programs as per the recommendations in the opinion.
- We recommend adding an operative paragraph in the broadband opinion "encouraging member states to establish a universal service program to support telecommunications".

#### Enhanced Cooperation

- We are pleased with the compromise language reached on the enhanced cooperation opinion, and express deep concern with some of the originally proposed language.
- Given some of the proposed original language and the robust debate we saw at the IEG, we recommend not opening this particular opinion up for debate at the WTPF.

### Multistakeholderism in Internet governance

- We are ultimately satisfied with this draft opinion. We would like to commend point “c” in the the “invites” paragraph of the *multistakeholderism in Internet governance* opinion, as we strongly support improving the participation of developing country stakeholders in the initiatives, entities, and institutions involved in various aspects of Internet Governance and stand ready to work with other stakeholders to implement this initiative.
- We would also note that we were very concerned with the language in the opinion *on the role of government in the multistakeholder framework* and are pleased that it was not forwarded to the WTPF.

### Inclusivity of communications for all

- It is regrettable that the UK draft opinion on inclusivity for all was dropped as it encompassed a range of important issues that should be discussed within the context of the WTPF and look forward to discussing these issues throughout the WTPF process.
- We encourage continued acknowledgement of the Human Rights issues that have been raised in regard to the issue of Internet Governance, including support for the Freedom of Expression and for the Freedom of Association that is enabled by the Internet.

### **Concrete proposals on process**

With regard to the WTPF itself we ask that the ITU

- Ensure that civil society has the ability to have an independent voice and an equal role in the WTPF meeting in May;
- Provide for both remote participation and live webcasting of the WTPF meeting, with the video, audio, and text transcripts, as far as possible, to enable participation by all, including persons with disabilities;
- Create spaces during WTPF for civil society to express their views, through an online platform for comment that is part of the official WTPF record, and through speaking rights as was done during the WSIS process.

Signed:

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